

Appl. No. : 09/231,415
Filed : January 14, 1999

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A purchase request management system comprising:

~~a system database comprising:~~

a plurality of purchase requests request records created from data received from potential buyers and that each identify at least one, said data including buyer contact information and product and buyer data; and information;

~~a plurality of limited groups of one or more dealers accessible to the buyer and that are designated to have access to purchase requests that identify a product that the dealers sell, wherein each limited group of dealers has substantially fewer dealers than an unlimited group of dealers that includes every dealer accessible to the buyer that sells the product;~~

a plurality of participating seller records comprising information about a plurality of participating sellers, said purchase request records and seller records stored on computer-readable medium;

a buyer ~~dealer~~ seller association software module stored on computer-readable medium and configured to ~~exclusively assign each of said purchase request received from a potential buyer to the one or more dealers designated by the system database to have access to the records to only a subset of the participating sellers in accordance with purchase request; criteria, said purchase request criteria for each of said participating sellers predetermined in accordance with a relationship between a lead distributor and each of said plurality of participating sellers~~

a ~~dealer~~ seller access software module stored on a computer-readable medium and configured to ~~permit~~ provide each dealer ~~to of said participating sellers with access the to said system database over a computer network using a remote terminal for viewing and to view and manage only those~~ managing said purchase requests request records assigned to the dealer, said seller by said buyer-seller association software module; and

a processor in communication with said software and configured to implement instructions of said software modules.

27-99. (Canceled)

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100. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 26, wherein the ~~dealer-seller~~ access module receives ~~permits each dealer-seller-entered to enter~~ information about at least one of the purchase requests and stores the seller-entered information ~~is stored in the a~~ system database.

101. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 100, wherein the ~~dealer-seller~~ access module receives ~~permits each dealer-seller~~ instructions to assign at least one task related to at least one purchase request to a user associated with the ~~dealerseller~~.

102. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 101, wherein information about assigned tasks is stored in a ~~the~~ system database.

103. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 100, wherein the ~~dealer-seller~~ access module receives ~~permits each dealer a seller-entered to enter a~~ status related to at least one purchase request.

104. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 103, wherein information about purchase request status is stored in a ~~the~~ system database.

105. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 26, further comprising a ~~wherein the~~ system database further comprising ~~es~~ a plurality of product records, each product record corresponding to at least one product sold by at least one of the ~~dealers-sellers~~ and comprising at least a product type and an estimated product price.

106. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 105, wherein the system database is configured to be accessible over a computer network to at least one potential buyer using a remote terminal and to provide product information to the potential buyer.

107. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 26, further comprising a ~~wherein the~~ system database further comprising ~~es~~ a plurality of predefined sales regions and each purchase request corresponds to at least one of the predefined sales regions based on at least one geographic designation associated with the buyer contact information ~~data~~.

108. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 107, wherein the ~~buyer-sellerdealer~~ association module is configured to assign each purchase request to only one ~~dealerseller~~.

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109. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 108, wherein the geographic designation associated with the purchase request is derived from contact information of the potential buyer to whom the purchase request corresponds.

110. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 109, wherein the geographic designation associated with the purchase request is derived from the potential buyer's zip code.

111. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 26, further comprising a wherein the system database further comprises a plurality of exclusive database regions, each exclusive database region being reserved for a single ~~dealer~~ seller and being configured to store only those purchase requests assigned to the single ~~dealerseller~~.

112. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 111, wherein the buyer-~~dealer~~ seller association module is configured to assign each purchase request to one or more ~~dealers~~ sellers by storing a copy of the purchase request in the exclusive database region of each assigned ~~dealerseller~~.

113. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 112, wherein the ~~dealer~~ seller access module is configured to permit each dealer to access a purchase request substantially immediately upon a copy of the purchase request being stored in the ~~dealer's~~ seller's exclusive database region.

114. (Currently Amended) The purchase request management system of Claim 112, wherein the ~~dealer~~ seller access module provides access permits to each dealer ~~seller to access of~~ only those purchase requests assigned to the ~~dealer~~ seller by providing access to ~~permitting the dealer~~ seller to access of only the exclusive database region reserved for the ~~dealerseller~~.

115-132. (Canceled)

133. (New) The purchase request management system of Claim 26, wherein said purchase request criteria for said plurality of participating sellers are collectively configured to ensure that the system assigns each of said purchase request records to only one of a plurality of subsets of the participating sellers that sell the product identified in the purchase request record.

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134. (New) The purchase request management system of Claim 26, wherein the plurality of subsets of participating sellers for a given product includes at least one subset containing just one seller and each of the subsets of participating sellers for a given product is no more than a small number relative to the total number of participating sellers for a given product.

135. (New) A purchase request management system comprising:

a system database comprising:

a plurality of purchase request records created from data received from potential buyers, said data including buyer contact information and product information;

a plurality of dealer records created from data received from dealers registered to use said system, said data including dealer contact information and product information; and

database software stored on computer-readable medium;

a buyer-dealer association software module stored on computer-readable medium and configured to assign said purchase requests to one or more of said registered dealers; and

a dealer access software module stored on computer-readable medium and configured to permit said registered dealers to access said system database over a computer network using a remote terminal, said access including access to purchase request records assigned to said dealer by said buyer-dealer association module.

136. (New) The purchase request management system of claim 135, wherein the same type of product is offered by substantially all of the dealers registered to use the system.

137. (New) The purchase request management system of claim 135, wherein the type of product is a vehicle.

138. (New) The purchase request management system of claim 135, wherein some of the dealers do not offer all of the products.

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139. (New) A purchase request management system comprising,

a data storage device containing contact information for a plurality of dealers, each of said dealers offering substantially the same type of product, said dealers divided into a plurality of groups, each group having from one to a plurality of dealers and together forming several groups at least some of which have a plurality of dealers;

purchase request software stored in storage media including instructions to direct the storage of purchase requests and instructions to make an association of each stored purchase request with a dealer group;

dealer access software including instructions to allow the dealer or dealers within a dealer group access to those purchase requests the purchase request software has associated with said dealer group and to prevent access to at least some purchase requests associated with other dealer groups; and

a processor in communication with said storage device and said software, said processor configured to implement the software instructions.

140. (New) The purchase request management system of claim 139, wherein the type of product is a vehicle.

141. (New) The purchase request management system of claim 140, wherein the some of the dealers do not offer all of the vehicles for which purchase requests are expected.